

## LUXURY: PAST AND PRESENT IN RUSSIAN SOCIETY.

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### *Abstract*

*The article analyzes topics related to the study of luxury as a form of manifestation and realization of excessive consumption, seen from one of the most influential authors of the early twentieth century Sergei Witte and works of modern scientists. The relevance of the conceptual study on luxury is that it is not only a socially conscious reality in the sphere of consumption, which differentiates society, but also a factor that affects the nature of relations between different social groups in society. The study used the document analysis method, ranging from the synchronic (modern) and diachronic (historical), tracking the evolution of the concept of "luxury", and identifying the origins of the functional characteristics of this concept.*

### Introduction.

In stating those fundamental changes in society that took place in the middle of the last (XX) century and gave reason to consider society of a given period to be fundamentally different from the basic framework of the industrial, social science reflected the fundamentally new content of social being in the following aspectual terms-names: "superindustrial civilization", "Post-industrial", "scientific", "technotronic", "information" ("telecommunication") society, "consumer society", etc. Modern developed states are in a transitional state on the path to creating and functioning a full- fledged electronic state, the formation of "digital inequality" is observed, the possibility of using future technologies at the level of managing the global information society is not ruled out.

The steady trend of cyber socialization of the population, dictating its own rules, sometimes dangerous for human life and society, will necessarily lead to the establishment of a certain dependence of the population, to a certain extent to self-destruction of a person as a rational being [Komarov S.A., Vorobyov S.M. (2019), from. 17].

### DEVELOPMENT.

Research methodology.

In the process of cognition of state-legal phenomena were used:

General scientific methods (formal-logical, systemic, structural-functional, concrete-historical).

General logical methods of theoretical analysis (analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparison, abstraction, analogy, modeling, etc.).

Private scientific methods (technical and legal analysis, specification, interpretation, etc.) [Komarov S.A. (2019), p. 32].

Study results.

In the works devoted to the study of a fundamentally new state of society, the time boundaries of the distinguished period were determined, and within the framework of the paradigm proposed by the authors and objectified by him through the term, the defining features of an established and aspiring to the dominance of the quality of life of society were emphasized. However, this did not mean that global transformations are limited only to the sphere declared in the term and do not lead to comprehensive changes in all spheres of life and relate not only to the West, but also manifest themselves globally - on a universal scale.

When researching at the synthesis level, in the coordinates of interdisciplinary, it is advisable to consider the current characteristics of society comprehensively "as applied to four main areas:

Technology, i.e. means of production and farming.

Social structures.

The political organization of society.

Spiritual principles" [Erasov BS (1996), p. 529].

However, at the level of analysis, in our opinion, it is promising at first to focus the research vector on the consideration of a specific component of a given system, of course, bearing in mind that any component in the system "grows" with meanings.

So, when researching, for example, the social structures of society, it is advisable to present, in a sociological aspect, in particular the structure of consumption and its elements to identify qualitative changes in them, as well as to identify the factors that caused the changes. Therefore, our appeal to consider the concept of "luxury" in relation to Russian society is relevant, and it is important to analyze the evolution of this phenomenon, starting from pre-revolutionary times and ending today with the unconditional dominant of consumerism and luxury.

With regard to domestic science, it is worth emphasizing that the new features that were discovered in the second half of the 20th century were interpreted in the narrow and strictly regulated framework of historical materialism in the light of the theory of the scientific and technological revolution and criticism of capitalism. Currently, the systemic changes of the post-Soviet period have received meaning in a number of original studies.

So, Professor D.V. Ivanov offers an unusual interpretation of the current state of society. In his elegant description, so to speak, he claims: "... post-industrial society and modernist culture are no longer relevant, they turn out to be what we have already experienced, and the phenomenon that determines our present now has become no claim to epoch-making and fateful glamor "[Ivanov D.V. (2008); Mamedov A.K. (2014)].

D.V. Ivanov believes that for modern intellectuals, glamor, as the defining phenomenon of our time, is worthy of serious attention because “it fascinates or throws into confusion its expansion in all areas of ultramodern society” [D. Ivanov (2008); Mamedov A.K., Corkia E.D. (2015)]. According to D.V. Ivanov’s current “intellectuals” recognize “glamor ... as something more than a lifestyle”, and “present it in two ways:

Glamor is an aesthetic form that is distinguished by its brightness and plainness, which any process in today's society can take.

Glamor - an unprincipled ideology, characterized by a huge influence on the thinking and behavior of an increasing number of people and at the same time by absolute indifference to the values that involve people in society, civilization, history” [D. Ivanov (2008); 9-10].

The author expresses her own point of view in the following thesis: “Glamor is not just an aesthetic form or cultural logic, it is the very rationality of today's capitalism. Rationality - as a form of perception and giving meaning to any phenomenon - sets the logic of cultural, economic, technological, political, etc.” [D. Ivanov (2008); 12].

In a sociological review, in the final quotation (“etc.”) we would include the logic of social stratification and the logic of social relations - between levels and levels. In the light of the above theses, the proposed D.V. Ivanov designation of modern society as “glam capitalism”. In principle, any theory has a right to exist (in conditions of polytheoreticity and proliferation of scientific knowledge), especially beautiful.

If we consider this neologism in the system of traditional terms, then, in our opinion, it correlates mainly with the terminological combination of “consumer society” [A. Mamedov (2014); Mamedov A.K., Korkiya E.D., Malashonok S.G. (2016)]. This is confirmed, in particular, by the fact that, characterizing the five-element structure of glamor in the traditions of the primary elements of the universe of ancient philosophers, D.V. Ivanov considers luxury the “land” of glamor, and here it is

necessary to pay attention to the fact that luxury, as a special type of consumption, being in the zone of attention of intellectuals since ancient times, still does not have an exhaustive and all- encompassing definition, including through its functions. They objectify itself, and also to some extent explain the existence of luxury in a social organism.

During the development of socio-historical thought, researchers of such a phenomenon as “luxury” were divided into two areas: rigoristic and apologetic [Efimov E. G. (2011)]. Advocates of the “luxurious lifestyle” believed that it is an incentive for economic development, and opponents that this phenomenon contributes to the decomposition of the state and society.

Charles L. Montesquieu wrote about it this way: “the poorer the state, the more it is ruined by relative luxury and the more, therefore, it needs laws against relative luxury. The richer the state, the more it is enriched with luxury and the more it must refrain from laws against this type of luxury” [Montesquieu Charles Louis (1955)].

Werner Sombart, a German researcher of the 19th-20th centuries, paid special attention to “luxurious” consumption, linking it with the formation and development of capitalism. In the work “Modern Capitalism” [Sombart, Werner (1930)] (in the first

volume, which is now called "Luxury and Capitalism", but previously had the rough title "Love, Luxury and Capitalism"), he connects the popularization of the value of "luxurious" consumption with changing the role of women in the court-gynecocracy. Women become more free in their communication, require comfort and beauty, thereby stimulating ever-increasing costs. So, the royal court becomes the center of consumption, popularizing not the accumulation of money, but their waste. "To be accepted in Paris means to be received by Madame Pompadour". Gradually, this way of life spreads to all sectors of society, which becomes one of the factors in the development of capitalism and the collapse of premodernism.

In the traditional view, luxury is qualified as a special type of consumption through a quantitative criterion, even if it is not explicitly defined. Indicative in this regard is the definition of S.Yu. Witte in the fundamental work "Summary of lectures on the national and state economy, delivered to his imperial highness by Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich in 1900-1902" [Witte S.Yu. (1997)].

In our opinion, this treatise in itself already deserves attention today, if only because, as a certain starting point, it is possible to establish the time and optics of considering luxury, the dynamics of scientific ideas about it in Russian science. S.Yu. Witte is offered the following definition: "Consumption is recognized as luxury that consumes a large amount of human labor, accessible to few and can be abandoned without harming the physical and spiritual development of a person" [Witte S.Yu. (1997)]. In this definition, you can find some parallels with the ideas of the European Enlightenment. The attributes listed in the definition are socially relevant and have a paired axiology from the point of view of socially meaningless futility and irrational public spending on luxury. In the future, this assessment is explicated in the conclusion: "... luxury usually refers to objects that are not relevant for the physical and spiritual development of a person" [Witte S.Yu. (1997)]. The social significance of the emphasized futility for the individual stems from the fact that a civilized society is interested in the development of each member of the society.

However, S.Yu. Witte, like any qualified and conscientious researcher, not only ascertains the presence of something in the studied object, but also offers an explanation of the causes of the phenomenon, draws attention to its functions, and if it exists for a long time, then their features for a particular time period.

Considering the meaning and purpose of luxury, he includes it in the general category of "consumption" and lists the functions that are individually and personally oriented. In this case, the first (not significant) function is the satisfaction of the feeling of pleasure. By that time, the works of the French Enlightenment (Voltaire and Russo) on unreasonable overconsumption were very popular in Russian educated circles.

In social terms, the area of implementation of this function is limited only by the emotional sphere of the individual, and this function itself is reasonably in the field of view of sociology only because the human individual is a rational and social being, and therefore society cannot be indifferent to the state of its inner world.

The second function is denoted by S.Yu. Witte as a “nourishment” of vanity. This function has an outlet in the sphere of interpersonal relations, since vanity is, albeit in vain, not supported by a socially significant act, but a desire for honors, for a high public assessment of one's own person. As he correctly observes, with the development of “public” life, the second function of luxury dominates, which acquires a defiantly ostentatious character, including through the use of the press. In the understanding of S.Yu. Witte, in the socio-political sphere to a certain stage in the development of society, luxury in a sense can be rationally justified, since it realizes its symbolic and symbolic function, derived from estate inequality. In a society of social inequality based on inequality of property [Korkiya ED, Mamedov AK (2014); Mamedov A.K., Corkia E.D. (2015)], luxury in the form of material wealth is not only the relationship between the individual and luxury goods, it is also the relationship between social groups where the superiority of some over others is legalized by the right of wealth, and in the political sphere - between subjects and objects of power. So, in relation to the subjects of power, luxury to the necessary stage in the development of public self-awareness is, if not socially approved, then a necessary and rooted in the mind attribute that strengthens the prestige of power in the conditions of immaturity of society.

Emphasizing this function, the tsarist “minister-researcher” also points out the conditions for its withering away: “And until the peoples and society have not achieved such development that they will clearly understand the high tasks of the authorities and will respect this authority already for the

invaluable services rendered to it by the hostel, until since then, it is necessary that the highest authorities have a rich atmosphere due to the fact that a rich atmosphere acts on people's imagination and enhances the prestige of the authorities” [Witte S.Yu. (1997)].

So, the right to luxury S.Yu. Witte frames the level of the highest authority, but it can be considered that the specific function of luxury in the field of managerial relations is the materially signified luxury goods and a priori imposed on them by the infallible authority of the subjects of power. In the reasoning of the minister, for quite understandable (it would be strange in a different way) reasons, a critical assessment of this function is not directly given. Meanwhile, it is harmful because the primitive and “uncivilized” prestige of the subjects of power artificially maintained with the help of luxury, derived from the visual level of perception of its “virtues”, frees the carriers of power from the need to reinforce this prestige with concrete deeds useful to society.

The Tsar dignitary in his educational and didactic “lectures” puts all the “responsibility” for the government, by default “forced” luxury, as a whole, puts on temporary “underdevelopment”, “immaturity” of society. However, in the democratically-minded strata of Russian society, already in the 19th century, a different view was formed both on power and its luxuries, which were manifested not only on the agreed S.Yu. Witte is top notch.

Social mobility (especially after the reforms of 1861) was manifested in the need for new markers and the stigma of success. The merchants, and the townspeople in general, acquired the external attributes of prestige. We do not have sociological data pertaining to

that time, but information obtained from fiction can be a confirmation of the above. As an example, let's turn to the textbook poem (once compulsory in high school) by N.A. Nekrasova "Reflections at the front door". Describing in a bleak picture the futility of wretched and miserable peasant walkers, to reach out to a government official in solving his problems, the poet sarcastically states:

"And the owner of luxurious chambers Even a dream was deeply embraced" [13].

Evaluating S.Yu. Witte regarding the "compelled" expediency of government luxury, we will call these ideas rather optimistic, built purely in an educational context. After all, the subjects of power in real life are represented by specific individuals, which means that there are no objective guarantees that they are absolutely devoid of either a "sense of pleasure" or vanity. Therefore, until the desire for luxury disappears in all walks of life, we can only talk about the possibility, to some extent, through a democratic way (through public opinion), to influence, using public control, changes in the direction of the luxury vector in the system of "authority - representative of authority".

Assessing the conclusions S.Yu. Witte on the functions of luxury, it is worth emphasizing that he defines these functions in relation to the individual and through it to society, and then through it in relation to power as a kind of abstraction, without considering luxury in terms of level subjective- object relations and personal incarnations.

The sign function of luxury is realized, as follows from the arguments of S.Yu. Witte, and for the status marking of social groups. In this reasoning, he proceeds from the sociality of man. The basic postulate is the thesis: "Man is an imitative creature. Imitation leads <...> the establishment of class or class customs of consumption and fashion" [Witte S.Yu. (1997)].

For reasons of maintaining prestige and presenting estate status, excessive consumption is born - luxury. At the same time, luxury (from this angle) is not conceived as an attribute of only the privileged sections of society. It is present on one scale or another in the social being of each estate, as indicated by S.Yu. Witte: "Different types of consumption are composed in different social strata; these types are determined not only by incomes, but also by estate or class customs of the social circle to which this family belongs. With the income of the same family sizes, wealthy

peasants, bourgeois, merchants, officials, officers, writers represent peculiar types in the field of consumption" [Witte S.Yu. (1997)].

This circumstance gives rise to the temptation in all sectors of society to raise their status by possessing status, prestigious items, even at the cost of refusing to fully satisfy the necessities of basic necessity. Thus, a special kind of luxury is born and exists, which can be determined with the help of apt oxymoron N.A. Nekrasov "wretched luxury" [13].

So, the conditions for the emergence and existence of excess consumption in the form of luxury are not only the hypertrophied biological need of the individual for pleasure, but also the socially demanded sign that determines the high, privileged place of the individual in the social structure. Moreover, this place can be deliberately imitated by manipulating

iconic luxury in order to improve its social status. As well as readiness for a corruption dialogue, determining prices and parameters for resolving the issue. And this means that luxury in its symbolic and symbolic function identifies and integrates individuals in social communities and at the same time ranks these communities.

In the work of S.Yu. Witte, for understandable (status) reasons, clearly does not formulate a negative attitude towards luxury, although some disapproval still lies in the definition of "excess" in relation to consumption. Let us recall Leo Cassille (Swabrania) fighting anarchist gymnasiums with doorbells, which symbolized the wretchedness and soullessness of consumerism. However, as it was said above, in the different layers the negative attitude to luxury was actualized. Some negligence in clothes, a demonstrative restriction of everyday life (philistinism) have become a massive pattern of behavior. Bazarov was "more in demand" than Kirsanov, for "one worked, the other sybaritized".

This attitude found its effective implementation in the early twentieth century during the years of revolutionary transformations and in an extreme form manifested itself, in particular, in the pogroms (mostly in arsons) of noble estates in the village, mansions and palaces in the city. During the years of the Civil War and in the subsequent period of devastation, there could be neither material nor ideological prerequisites for excess consumption.

The ideological dominant of equality has made luxury a dangerous sign, and therefore it has moved, figuratively speaking, to an illegal position, marking "certain" and "former" in certain chamber situations. In the days of the NEP, for a short time, luxury "got out of the underground", acquiring the stigma of philistine existence. The literature of that period (V. Mayakovsky, M. Zoshchenko, A. Gorky, B. Pilnyak and others) instantly "seized" the spirit of new changes, reflecting the public's rejection of irrational consumption, the "trash's mug" did not inspire "revolutionary pathos".

Then, for many decades, when asceticism, self-restraint in the name of a brighter future were unwittingly cultivated in society, luxury was unacceptable in the present, and in relation to the future it was thought in its separate features as a ghostly ideal of a happy, prosperous life. In ordinary perception, the idea of communism acquired a purely consumerist character, transforming into the idea of equal access to endless and free benefits.

Starting from the 70s of the XX century, luxury as a consumption phenomenon in conditions of shortage or low quality of many goods in the mass consciousness is qualified as possessing scarce items, preferably imported ones, although identical domestic ones in their functional indicators were often not inferior to foreign ones. But the substantial field of luxury in this period is not limited only to material objects. How luxury is realized, for example, vacation abroad, although the level of service there vacationers and climatic indicators could not be better than in the Soviet Union.

At the indicated time, luxury also manifests itself in the sphere of realization of spiritual needs. It becomes prestigious; for example, to attend closed screenings of films, exhibitions, where screenings and views are held in special conditions, but not related to the advantages in perceiving the content of works of art. Access to such events was a sign

of selectivity, distinguished from the mass of the elect, designated a special community. There are also luxurious "gift" editions of books,

where printing excesses, of course, add nothing to the content of the literary text, but look good on the shelf.

In the conditions of declared social equality and fair accessibility for each member of society of material and spiritual wealth and values in accordance with the ideology of "to everyone according to their work", in reality, luxury does not always become well-deserved, and therefore a fair award is the best in the profession - the most talented, artisan and hardworking. Often, she points only to belonging to another "caste", which includes those who, in their acting interactions, are guided by the unwritten rule "you - to me, I - to you." In this system of socio-political and economic relations, where high income does not guarantee the availability of luxury, it implements its socially significant sign function in contrasting two social groups distinguished at the level of pre-scientific everyday awareness on the principle: "they know how to live" - "they don't know how to live". And at the level of scientific research, he objectively testifies to moral and moral disadvantage in society and in its individual social groups.

In fairness, it should be noted that there was conventional access to luxury. So, workers employed in hazardous industries, working in enterprises with hazardous working conditions, received the right to luxury, for example, to purchase a car, which was still a luxury item, and not just a means of transportation. Scientists, artists had the right to additional square meters of housing, however, officially it was interpreted as a study. In fact, additional square meters of housing could be used for other purposes, so they can be attributed to luxury. The above examples allow us to talk about the emergence of a special function of luxury - the function of material incentives.

In decades of perestroika cataclysm, luxury in its defiantly ostentatious, defiantly tasteless and rather primitive visual version has become a sign - a "brand" - for criminal communities and voucher nouveaux riches for secularism. In relation to these actualized relic social groups, luxury and in the changing social oppositions successfully realized its original symbolic function. She became a kind of stigma - a marker of success, framing from "suckers", an application to "raspberry" jackets.

Nowadays, under the conditions of "glam capitalism", luxury is in the "Big Five" system, which includes in addition to it "exotic, erotic, pink", which in the broad sense means "radical color solution of problems", "blonde", which in broad understanding means "controlled appearance, controlling consciousness" [D. Ivanov (2008)], has undergone some changes. This is manifested not only in consumption, which goes beyond the limits of functionality, which in the traditional view was considered in its vector orientation only in relation to a person and in the sphere of its consumption was realized in its norm at the level of material and material. This applies to the needs of basic necessities and the needs of comfort, as all that is necessary for normal and comfortable life of a person as a biological and social being.



Glamor has expanded the functional space of luxury. The luxury of “glam capitalism” presupposes an absolute redundant functionality both in relation to objects, and in relation to services, and even in relation to the human body [14]. So, clothing in its rational functional purpose is intended to protect a person from the harmful effects of the environment. However, today, clothes are no longer surprising, for example, for dogs, which themselves become a luxury item, emphasizing the status (or stupidity) of their owners.

In the service sector, glam luxury implements itself through payment disproportionate to labor costs. So, the fabulous cost, for example, of the fashionable “barber” service, gives the status price of the service, and therefore the service itself, an additional function - to be not only familiar, but also the basis for the formation of a certain social community - regular customers. Hypertrophic redundancy as the most important sign of glam luxury affects the human body. In all walks of life, the number of those who seek, for different purposes, to change the structure and shape of various parts of their body, and therefore their functions, is growing. The luxury of artificially “swollen”

lips and something lower goes beyond not only the limits of the necessary, but also the reasonable. And in this area, redundancy as a sign of luxury is obviously harmful to human health, therefore it represents a real socially significant danger. A certain transformation of attitude towards luxury has passed: from “it turns out to be possible” to being obligatory in relation to some kind of social cluster.

The cult of luxury as a sign of selectivity, exclusivity, which a person is ready to pay in the literal and figurative sense at any cost, in the conditions of an unprecedented development of information technology and the media has reached an unprecedented scale and distorted public consciousness. Value orientations have shifted, which makes itself felt in all spheres of public life. The most important and non-replenished resource - time - is ineptly spent on shopping, “social events”, etc.

In such circumstances, society and the subjects of power cannot remain indifferent to luxury. And they do not stay. So, attempts are made by economic measures to influence the negative trends caused by excess consumption; for example, in 2014, the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation considered a bill on luxury tax. However, already in the first reading, the bill proposed by one of the Duma factions, providing for the introduction of a special tax on luxury goods, which should be fully credited to the state budget, was rejected. The relevant committee on budget and taxes strongly opposed the bill. The deviation was motivated by the fact that earlier a decision was made regarding a tax on expensive vehicles, on the transition to taxation of real estate based on its cadastral value, and the issue of introducing a tax on expensive real estate is under development. It is clear and logical that in their motivation base the members of the budget and tax committee, when deciding on the rejection of the bill, proceeded primarily from formal economic arguments. Meanwhile, the authors of the bill, initiating its public discussion and adoption as a law, drew attention to social aspects, they rightly emphasized that at present the country has developed too high a level of social inequality. This dictates an urgent need

by redistributing wealth to lower this level. In the document proposed for consideration, the subject and price boundaries of luxury were indicated.

So, real estate included apartments, houses, summer houses and other buildings, premises and structures, as well as land plots, construction in progress, together with a land plot worth over thirty million rubles, and not in the cadastral, but in the market value. The number of vehicles includes not only cars, but also sea, river, and aircraft at a cost of more than sixty million rubles. At the same time, the document expanded the range of subjects owning luxury goods. They included not only individuals, but also legal entities [12].

We included the analyzed document in the subject area of sociological consideration because it is of particular interest as one of the official attempts at the pre-scientific level to consider luxury in the legislative field. The gap that has developed in our society, which is dangerous in its negative consequences, between, on the one hand, a social group living below the poverty line and, on the other hand, a social community living under conditions of demonstrably excessive consumption, needs not only a moral assessment of society, but also legislative regulation by the authorities. From the point of view of scientific prospects, the document under consideration outlines current trends in luxury research.

So, firstly, in the bill objects of luxury are objectively designated - movable and immovable property, qualifying as luxury on the basis of a completely objective criterion - price. It can be assumed that the consistent use of this criterion will, to some extent, prove fruitful to create a universal and comprehensive definition of luxury.

Secondly, the traditional list of luxury subjects has been replenished by including legal entities in it. And this means, from our point of view, that luxury can and should be investigated not only for its relationship with the subject of power and the individual, but also for its relationship with the legal entity.

Thirdly, a negative assessment of the gap between polar groups based on consumption, implicated in the phrase "high level", is socially significant in the sense that it is a real obstacle to the development of civil society, since a capable civil society is possible only in a civil world.

#### Conclusions.

In conclusion, we emphasize: at the present stage, one of the most important tasks of science should be a comprehensive study of luxury, not only as excess consumption, but also as a phenomenon that defines a lot in all areas of the social life of Russian society, originally oriented towards the derivative of history from the idea of moderation, and on social justice.

Luxury is a relative concept, rather moral, than legal. The task of lawyers to determine the boundaries, the framework of honestly earned luxury, eliminating the possibility of "luxurious living" outside the framework of social justice.

Therefore, the economic, social, tax, information, legal policy of the state should be aimed at preserving and ensuring moral values in the information society.

Conflict of interest.

The authors confirm the absence of a conflict of interest.

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